



Photo: Luca Kleve-Ruud/Save the Children

# **A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

***Children and Young People's Voices and  
Recommendations for the Post 2015 Agenda***



***“IT IS VITAL THAT THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN BE EXPLICITLY INCLUDED IN THE POST 2015 AGENDA. FOR COUNTRIES TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, GROWTH AND PROSPERITY THEY MUST INVEST IN CHILDREN AND ADDRESS PROTECTION”.***

Monrovia Declaration on Children by children and young people

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN TAKES PLACE IN EVERY COUNTRY. IT HAS SERIOUS EFFECTS ON A CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT.**

Preventing and responding to violence and exploitation is essential to ensuring children’s rights to survival, development, participation and well-being. Children and young people have shared their views and messages to create a world without violence against children. They emphasise that prevention and response to violence is essential to ensuring children’s rights to protection, survival, development, and participation.

This brief summary report shares key recommendations and messages from girls and boys aged 8-17 years from consultations that were organised and reported on by different child focused agencies between 2012 and 2013. More than 12,000 children and young people from diverse backgrounds have been actively involved in face to face consultations on the post 2015 agenda from across 70 countries covering every region of the world. **Violence against children was prioritised by girls and boys** as one of their most significant concerns that must be addressed in the post 2015 agenda. Analysis of online MY WORLD consultations by more than 40,000 children also illustrate that child protection is a key priority requiring prevention and response.

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A CLEAR VISION OF A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

Girls and boys most want to end:

Physical and humiliating punishment in homes, schools, care institutions and other settings

Sexual violence and abuse in homes, schools, care institutions and other settings

Harmful child work

Child marriage, trafficking and other harmful practices

***“Violence against children should be strictly condemned because a violence-free childhood is the right of every child.”***

(16 year old girl, Uganda)



Photo: Katerina Ilievska/SOS Children's Villages

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

These include increased efforts to:

- **Support families** so that all children can live in and be cared for by families, including children with disabilities. Family separation and violence in families should be prevented by: increasing local job opportunities for parents; providing more economic and practical support to families to better care for their children; and increasing parenting education for fathers, mothers and other caregivers.
- **Strengthen legislation, monitoring and reporting** to respond to all forms of violence against children, including stricter enforcement of laws to punish perpetrators who abuse, harm or exploit children.
- **Raise awareness to prevent all forms of violence against children.**
- **Provide child protection services** including: psychosocial support, parenting education, legal advice, assistance for children or women who have suffered abuse, and services for family members to prevent and overcome drug or alcohol use.
- **Ensure all children access safe schools** where codes of conduct prevent and address violence in schools; and promote **schools as a space for prevention and protection against violence**. The school curricula should include: sexual and reproductive health, prevention of teenage pregnancy; prevention of human trafficking, sexual exploitation etc.
- **Address discrimination** based on gender, disability, family income, ethnicity, religion, care status, sexual orientation, and other factors.
- **Prevent conflict and support peace building** in communities, schools and families.



Photo: Katerina Ilievska/SOS Children's Villages



Photo: Colin Crowley/Save the Children

- Ensure all boys and girls have **opportunities to rest and to play**.
- **Ensure children's participation** in decision making, access to information, and support for child led organisations and action initiatives. Children have asked to be involved in policy and practice developments affecting them, including opportunities to influence the development, implementation and monitoring of the post 2015 agenda.



## Family care, love, attention and protection:

Boys and girls of all ages have stressed their desire to be loved, cared for and protected in families. More needs to be done to prevent violence in families and to increase care and protection of children. Factors which negatively affect some parents and caregivers' abilities to care for and protect children include: use of physical and humiliating forms of punishment; domestic violence; drug and alcohol use; poverty related stress; parental separation due to migration for work, conflict or other factors; and discrimination based on gender, disability or other factors.

Children living without appropriate care, including children living in institutions or remand homes, children living or working on the streets, domestic child workers, refugee and displaced children face increased risks of neglect, emotional abuse, physical violence, sexual abuse and exploitation.



***"I want to have my mum and dad so we have a good family"***

(8-12 year old boy with disabilities  
living in residential care, Russia)

***"I feel insecure when my father uses drugs and becomes violent"***

(15 year old girl, Brazil)

***"Everybody wants to go home to live with their parents so they can give you love and attention"***

(10 year old girl living in residential care, Guyana)

## Punishment:

Girls and boys in different parts of the world continue to report that **physical and humiliating punishment** badly affects them in homes, schools, care institutions, work places, on the street and in other settings. Children of different ages are beaten, scolded and humiliated by parents, caregivers, teachers and others to punish or discipline them. Such punishment increases children's fears and insecurity and contributes to children running away from their home or dropping out of school. Violence between children's father and mother also makes children feel scared. Furthermore, bullying and violence among children in schools and communities was also highlighted as a concern. In addition, children working on the streets revealed how the police often harass, scold and punish them for no reason, other than for being on the street.



Photo: Ken Hermann/Save the Children

***"I will feel free when there is no more corporal punishment."***

(11 year old girl, Senegal)

**Sexual violence and abuse** was raised as a significant concern affecting girls and boys across the world. Girls and boys, including children with disabilities face risks of sexual abuse, intimidation and harassment in their homes, care settings, schools, work place, communities, refugee camps, on the way to school, and on the streets. Children are often threatened to keep silent about sexual abuse and may be told that adults will not believe them if they dare to report. Much more needs to be done to prevent sexual abuse, to encourage girls and boys to report abuse, and to punish perpetrators.

***“We do not feel free at school when teachers demand sex in exchange for good grades”***

(Girl, Liberia)

***“Some of the big men take little boys in a corner and have sex with them”***

(15 year old boy in residential care, Guyana)



***“This man is saying, ‘I will rape you today’. The girl is shouting for help.”***

(Girl, Malawi)



**Harmful work** has been raised by girls and boys in many consultations.

Due to poverty many boys and girls in different parts of the world are undertaking domestic, agricultural or income generation work to help their families or for their own personal survival. While many children want to support their families, they also want to be able to study, to rest, play and be protected from harm. Children have highlighted risks that they are exposed to as a result of performing particular jobs, including physical pain and exhaustion, sexual and physical abuse, exploitation, illness and separation from family. More efforts are needed to end harmful child work and to ensure children’s safety, protection, access to quality education, and opportunities for rest, play and recreation.

***“I feel unsafe where I work. It is an environment controlled by people who do not take me and my opinion into account, surrounded by corruption.”***

(15 year old boy, Mexico)

## **Child marriage, trafficking and other harmful practices**

badly affect children. Child marriage particularly affecting girls was raised by children in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East regions. In many parts of the world cultural and traditional practices continue to support child marriage. Conflict, disasters and poverty increase risks of child marriage, and girls living without parental care face particular risks. Child marriage often results in school dropout, early pregnancy, poor health, and family poverty. Girls are sometimes trafficked for arranged or forced marriages within and across borders. Boys are also trafficked for labour or sexual exploitation. Other harmful traditional practices highlighted by children included female gender mutilation in Africa, and honour killings in Asia.

***“Educate parents about the negative impact of child marriage”***

(17 years old girl, Sri Lanka)





**Discrimination and inequality** have been emphasised by girls and boys in almost every consultation. Children face discrimination and inequality due to gender, disability, caste, class, ethnicity, religion, family income, care status, HIV status, refugee status, sexual orientation, early pregnancy or other factors. Discrimination makes children feel isolated and sad. It increases risks of neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation. Boys and girls living in a situation of vulnerability or exclusion have asserted their need not to feel “less than others”, and their desire to be treated with care and respect. More efforts are needed to prevent and address bullying and discrimination and to increase equality.

***“I like staying with supportive and caring guardians who do not look down on me because I am an orphan”***

(15 year old boy living with his extended family, Malawi)



***“A united family”***

(Girl, Brazil)

## **Prevention of conflict and promotion of peace**

is needed to protect children. Children want to live in peaceful communities and societies. Conflict and insecurity increases risks of violence, family separation, recruitment in armed groups, and fears associated with armed violence or crime. In particular, children and young people in Latin America raised fears and concerns about the levels of gang violence, guns, drug abuse and crime related violence. Girls and boys have expressed their desire for peace in families, schools, communities and societies.

Photo: Anonymous/SOS Children's Villages



***“A child using a firearm makes me so angry and insecure”***

(9 year old boy, Brazil)

**Participation is crucial to children's protection.** Through their own groups, associations and networks, girls and boys are more aware of their rights and are taking action to prevent and respond to different forms of violence and exploitation. They request increased support from parents, teachers, elders, civil society actors and government officials at all levels to partner with them and to take their views seriously. Children's rights to information, expression, association and participation in decision making should be more supported.

***“We can contribute our vision and opinions about our reality, participating with opinions on our problems and priorities.”***

(Young person, Peru)

***“We have something to contribute. We are full of energy waiting to be transformed into action”***

(Young people, Middle East and Eastern Europe)



Photo: Save the Children

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\* The Global Movement for Children Latin America and Caribbean is the largest strategic alliance of civil society organizations, international agencies, and multilateral and regional organizations covering Latin America and the Caribbean, working with and for children and adolescents, under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights vehicles. They are members of the alliance the Asociacion Cristiana de Jovenes (YMCA), ChildFund International USA, Defence for Children International, the Inter-American Institute of the Child, SOS Children's Villages International, Plan International, Save the Children, Red ANDI, REDLAMYC, UNICEF and World Vision; Ecpat International and Child Helpline International as observers.



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